

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-16

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INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

USMISSION GENEVA

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USINT BAGHDAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 8200

GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL

LONDON FOR LAMBRAKIS

E.O. 116552: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PINS XF

SUBJECT: HOPES FOR FEDAYEEN PARTICIPATION AT GENEVA CONFERENCE

EVERYBODY GETTING IN THE ACT

REF: BEIRUT 7974

SUMMARY: EFFORTS BY VARIOUS ARAB STATES TO NUDGE PLO

"MODERATES" TOWARD CLOSER ASSOCIATION WITH ME SETTLEMENT

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PROCESYLQB VIA RAPPROCHMENT WITH JORDAN AND PLO ATTENDANCE

AT GENEVA CONFERENCE) SEEM TO BE GROWING IN INTENSITY AND ALSO IN COMPLEXITY. IN MEANTIME, FEDAYEEN APPEAR AS DIVIDED ON THESE ISSUES AS EVER, AS WELL AS BEING VARIOUSLY FLATTERED, SUSPICIOUS OR CONFUSED BY SIGNS (REAL OR IMAGINED) THAT PALESTINIAN PROBLEM MAY BE HAVING HEIGHTENED IMPACT ON OFFICIAL AMERICAN AND ISRAELI ATTITUDES. END SUMMARY.

1. OFFICIAL PLO REACTION TO REPORTS FROM WASHINGTON RE POSSIBLE U.S. CONTACTS WITH FEDAYEEN LEADERSHIP HAS BEEN TO POOH-POOH ENTIRE SUBJECT. PLO (Wafa) NEWS AGENCY QUOTED "RESPONSIBLE" FEDAYEEN SOURCE HERE JULY 15 AS DENYING ANY SUCH CONTACTS HAD TAKEN PLACE OR THAT ANY MIGHT OCCUR IN FUTURE. "WHOLE STORY IS UNFOUNDED", HE TOLD Wafa, VOWING THAT FEDAYEEN WOULD NOT BE FOOLED BY "AMERICAN MANEUVERS" DESIGNED TO DISGUISE U.S. "REFUSAL TO RECOGNIZE LEGITIMATE RIGHTS OF OUR PEOPLE" AND CLOAK U.S. "HOSTILITY" TOWARD PALESTINIANS.

2. AT SAME TIME, HOWEVER, WE NOTE THAT REPORTS OF HEIGHTENED U.S. INTEREST IN PALESTINIANS, COMBINED WITH RECENT STATEMENTS BY ISRAELI LEADERS RE RECOGNITION OF PLO, HAVE GIVEN RISE TO USUAL CONFLICTING REACTIONS AMONG VARIOUS FEDAYEEN GROUPS. PLO "MODERATES", FOR EXAMPLE, HAVE GENERALLY GREETED THESE REPORTS AS SIGNS OF "VICTORY", WITH PLO (Wafa) NEWS AGENCY GOING SO FAR AS TO ASSERT THAT "NEW AMERICAN-ZIONIST ATTITUDE TOWARD PALESTINIAN PEOPLE ... IS RESULT OF OUR LONG ARMED STRUGGLE" AND TO CONCLUDE THAT "WE HAVE NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO CONTINUE ARMED AND POLITICAL STRUGGLE IN ORDER FORCE ENEMY TO RETREAT FURTHER AND ENABLE US ACHIEVE GREATER GAINS". IN ADDITION, SA'QA SPOKESMAN QUOTED HERE JULY 15 SAW THESE DEVELOPMENTS, AS WELL AS JULY 3 U.S.A SOVIET COMMUNIQUE, AS POSITIVE CHANGE IN U.S. ATTITUDE TOWARD PALESTINIANS, ALTHOUGH HE VOWED LATTER WOULD NEVER BE PERSUADED RECOGNIZE JEWISH STATE OF ISRAEL.

3. OTHER FEDAYEEN GROUPS, ESPECIALLY (BUT NOT EXCLUSIVELY) THE DIE-HARDS, HAVE SEEN THINGS IN CONSIDERABLY DIFFERENT

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LIGHT. JOINED BY LOCAL PRO-FEDAYEEN DAILY AL MUHARRIR AND HAWATMEH'S PDFLP, THEY WERE QUICK TO BRAND SUDDEN ISRAELI-AMERICAN INTEREST IN PALESTINIAN ISSUE AS "DIABOLICAL MANEUVER" AIMED AT ENTICING FEDAYEEN TO TAKE PART IN NEGOTIATIONS AT GENEVA AND THEREBY TO RECOGNIZE ISRAEL'S EXISTENCE. PDFLP, HOWEVER, CONTENTED ITSELF WITH BAD-MOUTHING ISRAELI MININFO YAARIV FOR HIS "IMPERIALIST ARROGANCE", WHILE PFDP/GENERAL COMMAND SPOKESMAN RAILED

AGAINST PERVASIVE "CONSPIRACY" WHICH, WITH 'ARAFAT'S AND HAWATMEH'S CONNIVANCE, HE ALLEGED IS AIMED AT HORNSWOGGLING PLO INTO RECONCILIATION WITH JORDAN AND INTO ACCEPTING PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT AT GENEVA "UNDER AMERICAN CONDITIONS".

4. ISSUE OF PLO RAPPROCHEMENT WITH JORDAN IS CONTINUING FOCUS OF INTER-FEDAYEEN CONTROVERSY ALSO, WITH SADAT HAVING ANNOUNCED HOLDING OF EGYPTIAN-JORDANIAN-SYRIAN-FEDAYEEN " MINI-SUMMIT" PRIOR TO SEPT 3 AND WITH 'ARAFAT HAVING REITERATED PLO TERMS FOR RECONCILIATION(PARA 3, REFTEL) IN LATEST NEWSWEEK INTERVIEW. SA'QA'S ZOHAYR MUHSEN HAS LATELY BEEN QUOTED AS SAYING RAPPROCHEMENT WITH GOJ WAS NOT ACTUALLY DISCUSSED AT LAST WEEK'S PLO EX COMM MEETING IN BEIRUT, BUT HE WAS CAREFUL NOT TO RULE OUT BOTH ITS DISCUSSION AND ACTUAL CONSUMMATION AT SOME LATER STAGE-- ASSUMING GOL MEETS FEDAYEEN CONDITIONS (WHICH APPARENTLY HAVE AGAIN BEEN EXPANDED TO INCLUDE KING HUSSEIN'S RENUNCIATION OF HIS WEST BANK FEDERATION PLAN) AND ASSUMING IT IS DICTATED BY WHAT MUHSEN CALLS "PALESTINIAN INTERESTS". NOT SURPRISINGLY, ESSENTIALLY SAME SENTIMENTS WERE REGURGITATED HERE JULY 12 BY SYRIAN-BACKED DAILY, ASH SHARQ, WHICH EDITORIALIZED THAT PRESENT STAGE OF ME DEVELOPMENTS REQUIRES SYRIA, JORDAN, EGYPT, AND PLO TO FIND "JOINT FORMULA" THAT WILL ENSURE UNIFIED AND COORDINATED ARAB POSITION AT NEXT STAGE OF GENEVA TALKS. SHARQ PREDICTED THAT UPCOMING MEETING BETWEEN SADAT AND ASSAD WOULD RESULT IN AGREEMENT ON ACTION-PLAN TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL. AT SAME TIME, FOLLOWERS OF 'ARAFAT AND CO. ARE LETTING IT BE KNOWN HERE THAT KING FEISAL, IN JULY 14 MEETING WITH 'ARAFAT AT TAIF, HIMSELF PROMISED TO "SETTLE" FEDAYEEN-JORDANIAN FEUD IN ORDER ENSURE SAME RESULT.

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5. UNFORTUNATELY FOR 'ARAFAT AND MUHSEN (AND THEIR RESPECTIVE ARAB BACKERS), THEIR CAUTIOUS READINESS TO ACCEPT IDEA OF RECONCILIATION WITH "BUTCHER" HUSSEIN (WHOM 'ARAFAT PERSISTENTLY, AND ABSURDLY, CHARGES AS RESPONSIBLE FOR 25,000 PALESTINIAN CASUALTIES IN 1970 FIGHTING IN EAST JORDAN) CONTRASTS GREATLY WITH VITUPERATIVE OPPOSITION TO SAME IDEA EMANATING FROM FEDAYEEN DIE-HARDS, NOTABLY PFLP/CG (SEE ABOVE), PDFLP AND PFLP. LATTER, IN COMMUNIQUE ISSUED HERE JULY 13, NOT ONLY DENOUNCED ANNY MEETING HELD BETWEEN PLO AND GOJ AS "TRAITOROUS DEVIATION" FROM PALESTINIAN NATIONAL CHARTER (WHICH INDEED IT WOULD BE) BUT ALSO FULMINATED AGAINST GENEVA CONFERENCE, SC RES 242, 1947 UNGA PARTITION RESOLUTION, EGYPT, SYRIA, IMPERIALISM, ZIONISM, ARAB "REACTION" AND KITCHEN SINK. PFLP/GC AND PFLP JIBES WERE SO ABUSIVE THAT THEY DREW UNUSUAL PUBLIC REBUKE FROM

PLO EX COMM ON JULY 14 IN FORM OF STATEMENT "REGRETTING" DEROGATORY REFERENCES TO 'ARAFAT AND HAWATMEH AND DEPLORING USE OF LANGUAGE OFFENSIVE TO EGYPT AND SYRIA. IN ADDITION, ZOHAYR MUHSEN--IN MOVE AMUSINGLY ANALOGOUS TO PRIMIN RABIN'S DEMAND THAT MEMBERS OF ISRAELI CABINET CEASE PUBLIC COMMENT ON PALESTINIAN ISSUE--CALLED ON VARIOUS FEDAYEEN SPOKESMEN JULY 15 TO STOP MALIGNING AND CONTRADICTING EACH OTHER IN PUBLIC.

6. COMMENT: WHILE WAR OF WORDS BETWEEN FEDAYEEN GROUPS (AND BEHIND-SCENES MOVES BY ERSTWHILE ARAB SPONSORS) WAXES HOTTER AND HOTTER, WE NOTE KING HUSSEIN IS DUE ARRIVE IN EGYPT TODAY FOR THREE DAYS OF TALKS WITH SADAT. (FEDAYEEN CIRCLES HERE SEEM TO HAVE CONVINCED THEMSELVES THAT SADAT WILL URGE KING TO RENOUNCE HIS WEST BANK FEDERATION PLAN, ALTHOUGH THERE ARE OTHER REPORTS THAT EGYPTIANS --OTHERS SAY MOROCCANS-- MAY PROPOSE SOME FORM OF ARAB LEAGUE CUSTODIANSHIP OVER "LIBERATED" WEST BANK AND GAZA STRIP PENDING RESOLUTION OF GOJ-FEDAYEEN DIFFERENCES AT SOME LATER DATE.) AT SAME TIME, PROMINENT PALESTINIAN PERSONALITIES-- INCLUDING KNOWN HASHEMITE SUPPORTERS FROM OCCUPIED TERRITORIES--REPORTEDLY ARE CONVERGING ON BEIRUT TO TOUCH THEIR FORELOCKS TO PLO AND TO TAKE PART IN WHAT ARE BEING DESCRIBED (AGAIN) AS CRUCIAL DISCUSSIONS OF PALESTINIAN PARTICIPATION IN GENEVA CONFERENCE. WE GATHER THAT PLO EXCOMM HAS DEFERRED ITS OWN CONFIDENTIAL

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FURTHER DELIBERATIONS ON THIS SUBJECT UNTIL THESE UNWIELDY CONSULTATIONS HAVE TAKEN PLACE AND TO ALLOW TIME FOR GREATER CLARITY TO EMERGE RE EGYPTIAN-SYRIAN-OTHER ARAB THINKINNG RE FUTURE PALESTINIAN ROLE AT GENEVA. IN MEANWHILE, PLO LEADERSHIP IS GIRDING ITSELF TO VISIT MOSCOW IN NEAR FUTURE, FOLLOWING PROJECTED VISIT BY 'ARAFAT TO EGYPT, LIBYA AND ALGERIA. AT LAST REPORT, LOOKS AS IF PLO DEL WILL CONSIST OF "ARAFAT, FAROUQ QADDOUMI, ZOHAYR MUHSEN, KHALID AL FAHOUM, AND ABDUL MUHSEN ABU MAYZAR. WE UNDERSTAND THAT 'ARAFAT, ANXIOUS TO ENSURE THAT FEDAYEEN DEL TO MOSCOW WOULD PRESENT APPEARANCE OF MAXIMUM PLO COHESION AND "MODERATION", WAS CAREFUL NOT TO INVITE SUCH "REJECTIONISTS" AS PFLP'S AHMED YAMANI AND ALF'S KAYYALI TO JOIN DEL UNTIL HE WAS SURE THEY WOULD BOTH REFUSE TO GO. (THEY DULY REFUSED.) GIVEN LIKELIHOOD THAT INTER-FEDAYEEN DIFFERENCES AND SUSPICIONS DESCRIBED ABOVE ARE LIKELY TO CONTINUE AND EVEN BECOME MORE ACUTE, WE DOUBT THAT SOVS WILL ALLOW THEMSELVES BE FOOLED BY SUCH MANEUVER INTO THINKING THEY ARE DEALING WITH SOME NEWLY-UNIFIED GUERRILLA MOVEMENT. AS FOR EGYPTIANS AND SAUDIS, THEY MAY YET HAVE TO LEARN THIS LESSON THE HARD WAY. GODLEY

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